

Spiralling Prices Pauperizing People

When Press Reporters assembled at the Press conference held in the middle of July last asked Mrs. Indira Gandhi about rise in prices, she explained it away as "part of global phenomenon", adding, of course, an assurance, characteristic of her, that "our effort is to see that the poorest sections get their basic needs." The casual manner in which the Prime Minister dealt with so serious a question is indicative of her Government's indifferent attitude to the problem and incapability of assessing the gravity of the situation. Though Mrs. Gandhi at the said Press conference claimed that the performance on the economic front was "nothing short of miraculous" yet it is on record that during the last seventeen years India has witnessed rapid rise in prices. In spite of completion of more than two decades of economic planning in our country the Government has completely failed to tackle the problem of spiralling prices. As a result, the erosion in the value of Indian rupee which started with full force since 1955 has destroyed about three-fifths of its value already. And compared to August 1939, the value of the rupee is less than 14 paise now.

Broadly speaking, prices registered an average annual rise of 9.7 per cent during the period from 1955-56 to 1970-71, the compound rate of price rise being 6.2 per cent per year. In 1971-72, the average wholesale price index was 4 per cent higher over that of 1970-71. In the first quarter of 1972-73 (April to June) wholesale prices rose by 1.8 per cent over the previous quarter and were 6 per cent up compared to the corresponding quarter of 1971-72. According to Union Finance Minister, Mr. Chavan's figures, presented to the Lok Sabha on July 31 last, between May 6 and July 15 this year, the wholesale price index rose by 4.8 per cent with foodgrains going up by 8.9 per cent, edible oils by 11.3 per cent and sugar and allied products by 10.2 per cent. Taking the increase over the entire year, we see that the prices of jowar, bajra, pulses and sugar and allied products rose by 15.8, 39.4, 25.3 and 28.3 per cent respectively. It should be noted that these are the foodstuff which the poorest sections of our people consume.

It should further be noted that the people are concerned not with wholesale prices but with retail prices. So, if retail prices of these articles are considered, we shall face a still more dismal picture in so far as the

poorest sections of our people are concerned. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister of India does not feel ashamed to claim that the performance on the economic front is "nothing short of miraculous" and that her Government's "effort is to see that the poorest sections get their basic needs." In the said Press conference she also claimed that many of the **garibi-hatao** programmes have made "tremendous difference to the country." This bold assertion is true in the negative sense. There has, no doubt, been difference but to further disadvantage of the poor. Poverty has not diminished; on the contrary, it has increased with the result that the poor are being increasingly wiped out by the cruel hands of grinding poverty, mal-nutrition, disease and pre-mature death.

We know from newspapers that "the Government has now woken up somewhat belatedly to the need to do something about prices. The Cabinet has met twice in the last week to consider the problem and approve certain measures. The Planning Commission has been devoting most of its time to devising both short and long-term strategies against inflation. The Cabinet Secretariat has drawn up a number of

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Congress Practising Falsehood

Mr. Sankar Ghosh, Finance Minister of West Bengal, in his first budget statement made on the floor of the Legislative Assembly on March 25 last observed as follows: "The industrial policy and labour policy pursued by the CPI (M)-dominated UF Governments not only led to the closure of many industrial units but acted as a damper to the climate of investment." (Page 2 of the statement in English) At another place in the statement (Page 4) he said that "thanks to the policies pursued...the climate of investment was jeopardized by the difficult law and order situation, gheraos and labour troubles." To give his Finance Minister a moral boosting, the Chief Minister of West Bengal a few days back went a step further and said in New Delhi that the investment climate was so bad that between March 1967 and February 1972 investment offers of Rs. 8 crores only were received in the state.

In our issue dated August 1 last we established conclusively that the charge of closure of many industrial units in West Bengal due to labour policy of the UF Governments, gheraos and labour troubles levelled by ruling Congress leaders and Ministers, was a blatant lie. In this article we shall show that equally mendacious are the above observations by the Chief Minister and the Finance Minister of the present ruling Congress Ministry in the state in so far as the other part of the allegation which is related to industrial climate is concerned. It goes without saying that as on the earlier occasion, here also we shall rely on official figures not because we have any special fancy for them but just to avoid the charge that we are manufacturing figures.

Let us first take up for

examination the statement by the Chief Minister that between March 1967 and February 1972 investment offers of only Rs. 8 crores were received in West Bengal. We shall rely on only one official document, namely, the note submitted by the West Bengal State Government to the Parliamentary Consultative Committee in June 1970 when the state was under President's rule. In this note the State Government stated that 206 companies with an authorised capital of Rs. 11 crores were registered in 1968-69 against 213 companies with an authorised capital of Rs. 19.70 crores in 1967-68. Thus, only in two years not only offers for investment but also actual investment of Rs. 30.70 crores was made in West Bengal whereas the Chief

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Harbour No Illusion About Congress

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Minister says that in five years from March 1967 to February 1972 there were offers for investment of only Rs. 8 crores. Even if we leave aside the actual investment for the rest three years, the amount actually invested in two years far exceeds the figure given by the Chief Minister. The official figures, therefore, prove that the statement by the Chief Minister is baseless and false.

We shall now turn to the Finance Minister's observation that due to industrial policy and labour policy of the UF Governments the climate of investment in West Bengal "was jeopardized." What are the facts which should be taken into account to judge whether or not the investment climate was jeopardized? Three things—(i) applications for licences, (ii) number of licences issued and (iii) registration of companies. First, about applications for licences. In May 1970, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, the then Union Minister for Industrial Development and Company Affairs told Parliament that in three years from 1967, 202 applications for setting up new units, substantial expansion and carrying on new business were received from West Bengal and thereafter opined that "from the number of applications for licences from the state it cannot be concluded that there was a trend indicating a decline in investment interest in West Bengal." (quoted in **Hindusthan Standard** dated August 2 last) Mr. Ali Ahmed is no lover of the UF policies or the UF Governments in West Bengal. He is a ruling Congress top leader having, on the contrary, bias against the UF regime. Even then he said that it could not be concluded that the climate of investment in West Bengal "was jeopardized", as alleged

by the West Bengal Finance Minister.

Then about number of licences issued. The **Economic Review** for 1971-72 published by the present Government of West Bengal contains a table at page 88 which shows that compared to 1964 the number of licences issued in 1969 went down from 40 to 6 in case of Andhra Pradesh, from 4 to 1 for Assam, from 42 to 7 for Bihar, from 64 to 16 for Gujarat, from 21 to 3 for Kerala, from 148 to 12 for Madras, from 184 to 80 for Maharashtra, from 33 to 5 for Mysore, from 10 to 3 for Orissa, from 46 to 7 for Punjab and Hariyana, from 8 to nil for Rajasthan, from 39 to 11 for Uttar Pradesh and from 88 to 62 for West Bengal. If industrial policy and labour policy of the UF Governments in West Bengal had been the real cause of lack of enthusiasm on the part of entrepreneurs to apply for licences and float new companies, make substantial expansion or carry on new business then states other than West Bengal would not have been so much affected. In fact, the position of West Bengal is relatively much better compared to other states, not excluding Maharashtra where the decrease is about 55.6 per cent whereas in West Bengal the decrease is 29.5 per cent. So, from the point of view of licences issued also it cannot be concluded that during the UF regime in West Bengal the climate of investment "was jeopardized" or that "the industrial policy and the labour policy pursued by the UF Governments" "acted as a damper to the climate of investment", as alleged by the Finance Minister of West Bengal.

It is common knowledge that all licence-holders do not start business. This brings us to the question of actual registration of companies. Companies may be factories or may not be factories. We

take the case of registration of factories first. It should be noted that no factory is registered unless it goes up and is ready for production. So registration of factories is a proof of the licences being actually put into effect. According to the Factories Directorate of the State Government, new factories registered in West Bengal under the Factories Act were 181 in 1966, 154 in 1967, 160 in 1968 and 157 in 1969. Figures for subsequent years are not yet available.

The Finance Minister in his said budget statement admitted that "India passed through a recession in 1966 and started recovery from 1969" (page 4). The UF was in governmental power altogether for about 22 months, first time for about 9 months from March to November 1967 and then for about 13 months from March 1969 to March 1970. Thus, the period under UF rule witnessed serious economic recession. Judged in the background of economic recession, which affected West Bengal more than any other state, does the registration of 154 factories in 1967 and 157 factories in 1969 against registration of 160 factories in 1968 when West Bengal was under President's rule, i.e., under the rule of the Congress Government at the Centre augur so bad as to conclude that the climate of investment in West Bengal during the UF regime "was jeopardized" or that the industrial policy and labour policy of the UF Governments "acted as a damper to the climate of investment" as alleged by the Finance Minister of West Bengal? Certainly, no impartial and politically honest man will so conclude.

Next about registration of all non-Government companies, factories and non-factories. In 1966-67, 244 such companies were registered; in 1967-68, the

figure was 213; the corresponding figure in 1968-69 came down to 199. In 1969 from April to November the figure was 182. Subsequent figures are not yet available. It should be noted that in the entire period of 1968-69 West Bengal was under President's rule when the total number of new companies registered was 199. As against that in the figures in 1967-68 (greater part of the year was under the UF rule) was 213. It certainly is not bad as is sought to be made out. The same can be said about 1969.

So, there is no tangible ground to conclude that the industrial policy and labour policy of the UF Governments "acted as a damper to the climate of investment" in West Bengal or that because of such policies the climate of investment "was jeopardized," as alleged by the Finance Minister of the state. Official figures, on the contrary, prove this allegation to be baseless and false. Even a senior Congress Minister of the Central Government could not but say that this allegation is false. **Hindusthan Standard** which loses no opportunity to blacken the UF and the UF Governments in West Bengal and glorify the Congress, had to admit that "nobody will hold the United Front Government responsible for this setback. The causes are many and the failure of the fiscal and monetary policies of the Centre over the last decade is however the chief among them." The other day West Bengal's Commerce and Industry Minister openly charged that Centre's step-motherly attitude towards West Bengal had been the main reason for setback in industrial development of West Bengal. Mr. B.K. Das Chowdhury, ruling Congress MP, while participating in the Lok Sabha discussion on

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UP Land Ceiling Law Nakedly Serves Interests of big Landowners

Lucknow, August 16—The UP Ceiling (Amendment) Bill is before the State Legislature for consideration and passing. From the provisions of the Bill it will be clear that, notwithstanding tall talks, the ruling Congress through the proposed law is out to safeguard vested interests in land nakedly. The main provisions of the Bill are given below.

(1) The ceiling on land will be fixed on the basis of five-member family which should be deemed to consist of the husband, wife and three minor children.

(2) The ceiling for such a family has been fixed at 18 acres of irrigated land. Land will be considered irrigated if two crops can be grown on it in a year and water supply is assured at least twice for each crop through government or private source of irrigation.

(3) Land other than irrigated land, as explained in (2) above, should be treated as non-irrigated. The ceiling for such a family in case of non-irrigated land, mentioned in (4) below, has been fixed at 27 acres, one acre of irrigated land being equal to 1.5 acres of non-irrigated land.

(4) In the whole of Bundelkhand, the trans-Jamuna areas of Agra and Mathura districts and rocky lands of Allahabad and Mirzapur districts, two and a half acres of non-irrigated land will be taken as equivalent to one acre of irrigated land. Thus, the ceiling for such a family in this case comes up to $18 \times 2.5 = 45$ ares.

(5) Two acres of orchard land will be taken as equivalent to one acre of irrigated land.

(6) Every additional adult member of the family who does not hold any land in his or her name can have five acres of irrigated land in

addition to the ceiling for a five-member family provided that additional land accruing to a family on account of such additional adult members of the family cannot exceed 15 acres of irrigated land.

(7) Tea, coffee and rubber gardens are exempted from the purview of the ceiling law.

(8) The amending Act shall come into force retrospectively with effect from 24th February, 1970.

According to the proposed law, a family of eight or more members can own $18 + 15 = 33$ acres of irrigated land or $27 + 22.5 = 49.5$ acres of non-irrigated land or $33 \times 2.5 = 82.5$ acres of land in areas under (4) above or 66 acres of orchard plus any amount of land under tea, coffee and rubber plantation. Nevertheless this law has been described by the CPI as containing "some progressive provisions." (Vide **New Age**, Central Organ of the CPI, dated July 9 last). The people of our country very well know how big land-owners have been evading land ceiling fixed by laws by various fraudulent means in connivance with the administration and the ruling party. Even the ruling Congress Government in the State has nakedly allowed big land-owners to legally keep so much of land when land hunger of the landless and poor peasants of UP has assumed alarming proportions. This law completely exposes the anti-people pro-jotedar character of the ruling Congress and its Government.

Orissa State Committee of SUCI Condemns Government's Pro-jotedar Land Reform Policy

Cuttack, August 18—The Orissa State Committee of the SUCI has today issued a statement to the Press on the agrarian question in the State.

In the statement the Committee has stated that "peasant households each owning land upto 5 acres constitute 76.4 per cent of the total number of households but they among themselves possess only 37.7 per cent of the total land in the state, those owning land above 5 acres upto 10 acres constitute 13.8 per cent of the total number of households but possess 22.4 per cent of the total land, those owning land above 10 acres upto 33 acres constitute 8.7 per cent of the total number of households but possess 27.4 per cent of the total land and those owning more than 33 acres of land constitute 1.1 per cent of the total number of households but possess 12.5 per cent of the total land. Even these official figures, which are very often found to err in favour of the rich, clearly expose that land in Orissa has been concentrated in the hands of a few rich peasants while more than three-fourths of the total number of peasants have either no land at all or very little land. This is the position after twenty-five years since independence of the country during which period the Congress ruled the state for more than twenty years. So, however much the present Congress Ministry in the state tries to pose as progressive, the reality is that the Congress is equally responsible as the Swatantra Party, Utkal Congress and the Jana Congress for the pro-jotedar state of affairs now obtaining

in the agrarian sphere in Orissa."

The State Committee in the statement further states that "it is reported in newspapers that the present Ministry in Orissa has taken a decision about lowering the present ceiling on land holdings. We are not sure how far these newspaper reports are correct. We, therefore, desist from giving our views on the decision reported to have been taken by the Congress Ministry till the amending Bill in question is officially published, as there may be many a slip between the cup and the lip, between what has been published in newspapers and actual provisions in the amending Bill. However, it should be realized that mere reduction of the ceiling will not even touch the fringe of the problem, inasmuch as big land-owners will evade the ceiling fixed by law by various fraudulent means as they have done in all other states as a result of which very little land will be available for distribution among agricultural labourers and landless and poor peasants of the state. Only organised peasant movement can detect and recover benami land held by big land-owners in excess of the ceiling. We, therefore, urge upon the agricultural labourers and landless and poor peasants of Orissa to organise themselves solidly under the banner of the Krishak Khet Majooria Sangha and carry on sustained movement for the realization of their demands."

RESIST PRICE RISE BY ORGANISED MASS MOVEMENT

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contingency plans. All three Ministers in the Food and Agricultural Ministry are currently on tour in the drought-stricken States to assess the need for relief. And they are being followed by teams of officials." (*Statesman*, August 9) We may add two more events. There had been full-scale debates in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha about prices. And there ends the matter. What more can the Government do! The poorest sections of our people cannot expect that the Government can do miracles! So, they should keep quiet and maintain peace and order—this is Congress-panacea for checking price rise. Wonderful steps indeed!

What are the main factors behind this inflationary spurt? First, it cannot be denied that the present capitalist economy of our country is basically responsible for this unbearable state of affairs obtaining here. Second, the monetary and fiscal policies of the Government have landed the economy of the country into this inflationary spurt. Third, price-manipulation by monopolists and speculators also has been contributing its share in continuous increase in prices.

We all know that the Government has been taking recourse to unbridled deficit financing. According to the Reserve Bank of India (vide *Reserve Bank of India Bulletin*, May 1972), "money supply with the public registered a substantially larger expansion of Rs. 786 crores (10.6 per cent) during the 1971-72 busy season (November '71 to April '72—Editor, P.E.) than Rs. 581 crores (8.7 per cent) in the preceding busy season. ** Almost the entire expansion in money supply could be traced to net bank credit to Government, which rose by 819 crores, the rise being

larger by as much as Rs. 212 crores than that in the last busy season."

Then again, it is well-known that unbelievably high rate of indirect taxes, like Excise Duties, on essential commodities also is pushing up the prices. Total additional yield from Union Excise Duties alone amounts to Rs. 144.75 crores as estimated in the budget for 1972-73. This entire amount will be added to the prices, since in the ultimate analysis the burden of indirect taxation always falls not on the producer but on the consumer.

Furthermore, anti-people credit policy of the Government is enabling monopolists and speculators to get huge amounts of loans and advances from banks which they are utilizing in hoarding and cornering goods thereby creating artificial scarcity in the market and manipulating prices to reap maximum profit. According to the Reserve Bank of India, outstanding advances by scheduled commercial banks against food articles as on June 11, 1971 stood at Rs 430.39 crores. Add to this the huge amount of black money which is at the disposal of monopolists and speculators (according to Wanchoo Committee, Rs. 1400 crores was created as black money in 1968-69 alone which monopolists and speculators used to hoard and corner goods and raise their price). Every year the amount of black money is increasing with disastrous effect on price level.

Lastly, the Government by refusing to introduce all-out state-trading in essential commodities has been giving monopolists, speculators, hoarders and black-marketeers a free hand to hoard goods, create their artificial scarcity in the market, manipulate their prices, fleece the people and reap maximum profit. The cumulative effect of all

these is the inflationary spurt we are witnessing.

Any government that seriously wants to bring down prices and give some relief to the poorer sections of the people in the circumstances cannot but (i) check deficit financing, (ii) drastically reduce indirect taxation, (iii) stop advance by banks to big producers and businessmen against food articles and other essential commodities, (iv) make serious drives to detect and confiscate black money; at least immediately demonetize Indian currency notes of higher denominations, (v) introduce all-out state-trading in essential commodities and (vi) give exemplary punishment to hoarders, black-marketeers and speculators. Certainly, other measures also are to be taken. But in no case the above measures can be neglected or shelved. Is the Government ready to implement these measures, If not, all the furore it is making allegedly to bring down prices boils down to empty talk. Let the Government prove its sincerity to bring down prices by implementing the above-mentioned measures. We throw this challenge to the Government.

Bourgeois apologists, however, are saying that because of more wages paid to workers and employees prices are rising. The Prime Minister of India echoed this argument the other day. But this is a blatant lie; it is the hackneyed argument of vested interests. The truth is that it is not increase in wages that raises prices but just the other way round. Prices rise first then wages follow prices at a distance. As a result, the more the prices rise, the more is the gap between prices and wages and the more the real wages of workers and employees decline, notwithstanding some increase in monetary wages. This is what takes place in every capitalist country. India is a

capitalist country. It is taking place here also.

Union Finance Minister, Mr. Chavan, was only echoing the voice of the employer class when he "affirmed that the rising trend in the price level can ultimately be checked through increased production *alone*." (*Hindusthan Standard* dated August 10 last). It should be realized that increased production *by itself* is no guarantee against rise in prices. In spite of increased production, artificial scarcity can be created by hoarding and cornering of goods so produced and prices manipulated, resulting in rise in prices. This is what hoarders, black-marketeers and speculators are doing in our country to fleece the people and reap maximum profit. Union Finance Minister ought to know that without proper distribution increased production *alone* cannot check rise in prices. This is glaringly established by the fact that "in the last five years the average rate of growth of agricultural production has been 5 per cent" (*Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8 last) as against average rate of growth of population of 2.46 per cent per year. Thus, there has been increase in agricultural production relative to increase in population also. According to Mr. Chavan's assertion, prices of agricultural produce, in view of this increased production, then ought to have come down. But the fact is that not to speak of coming down, prices of agricultural goods have gone up considerably during this period.

Economic and Political Weekly (July 8 last) observed: "Given the past experience, it can be expected that the price rise will be much sharper—say, between 8 and 10 per cent per year—during the Fifth Plan period." It

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DELHI TEACHERS DEMONSTRATE

New Delhi, August 8—Organised by the Delhi University Teachers' Association, nearly three thousand teachers of the Delhi University and colleges under it demonstrated today outside Parliament demanding postponement of consideration by the House of the Delhi University Amendment Bill which replaces the Organisation promulgated by the President on June 22 last. Earlier, on August 2, the teachers went on strike which was a total success.

The most important provisions of the Ordinance are that it seeks to (1) make the colleges conducting courses in medical science, technology and music and fine arts autonomous, (2) set up one or more Councils of Colleges for collegiate education and (3) reduce the university court and the academic council to the status of mere advisory bodies and make the executive council of the University the supreme authority.

It should be noted that in the 1972 academic session, 97,247 students were enrolled by different colleges under the Delhi University as against 23,659 in 1962-63. In the background of this increase in the number of enrolment of students and demand by a section of so-called academicians that undergraduate studies not being a legitimate part of the university should be organised separately into boards of collegiate education, the Ordinance seeking to bring about the above changes in the structure of the university is to be judged. Whatever the Union Education Minister may say, the apprehension of the DUTA that the measures proposed in the Ordinance will "separate undergraduate education from post-graduate education and inevitably destroy the federal character of" the Delhi University is real.

In this connection it may be recalled that several years back there was a move by authorities to prescribe

different grades of pay for those employed by the University in its teaching departments and the teachers in the colleges on the ground that the former were better qualified and selected through more rigorous processes than recruitment in the colleges. The DUTA successfully resisted this move of discrimination aimed at disrupting the unity of the university and college teachers in Delhi. If the Ordinance is allowed to come into force, it will in the long run create an invidious distinction between the university teachers and college teachers and thereby weaken their unity.

Then again, it should also be remembered that the move to downgrade the university court and the academic council to mere advisory bodies and make the executive council the supreme authority of the university follows the recommendation of the Ford Foundation team which operated at the Delhi University with a sixty-lakh-dollar-grant. This move was attempted in case of the Calcutta University also under the guidance of the Ford Foundation team when the present Calcutta University Act was brought into being.

All these measures are in consonance with recent drives by the Government to curtail the autonomy of educational institutions which must be resisted by all right-thinking and democratically minded people of our country.

Settlement of Kerala College Issue

Trivandrum, August 17—As a result of agreement reached today between the State Government and the management of private colleges, the sixty-nine private colleges in Kerala that have remained closed since the current academic year began on June 5 last will re-open before September 1.

The terms of settlement, among others, include (i) the setting up of a five-member selection committee for appointment of teachers comprising one representative each from the State Government and the university, two representatives from the management and the fifth representative to be selected by the management in concurrence with the university, (ii) the filling up of 50 per cent of the seats for admission of students on the basis of merit, 20 per cent by members of scheduled castes and tribes, 20 per cent at the discretion of the management and the rest 10 per cent by members of the community that runs the institution, (iii) the bringing down of tuition fees in private colleges to the level obtaining in government colleges and (iv) direct payment of salary to teaching and non-teaching staff by the Government, the tuition fees collected by private colleges to be deposited with government treasury. The Government has agreed to pay salary to teachers with retrospective effect from June 1 last.

The KPCC President, Mr. K. K. Viswanathan and the KPCC General Secretary, Mr. A. K. Antony have reiterated in public speeches that "the ultimate aim of their party is to nationalize education." The leaders of the Youth Congress and the KSU have repeatedly declared that they "would not rest contented unless education is nationalized." In the circumstances, we cannot but call upon the people to resist any move for nationalization of education. For, under capitalist rule nationalization of education would not only destroy autonomy of educational institutions and reduce

them to an appendage of education department of the government but also give absolute power to the ruling capitalist class and the governments to pattern education in a particular line so as to achieve regimentation of thought for the purpose of fascization of the cultural life of the people. While opposing nationalization of education we at the same time strongly hold the view that the government should bear all educational expenses preserving full autonomy of educational institutions, not merely autonomy in educational matters but autonomy in administrative and all other matters as well.

This demand of ours for full autonomy of schools, colleges and universities does not, however, presuppose that education in Kerala should continue to be imparted, as at present, on the basis of castes, religions and communalism by reactionary and communal bodies. We are dead against educational institutions being managed and governed by communal organisations as we are opposed to nationalization of education. There should be full autonomy of educational institutions and education should be truly democratic, secular scientific and free from religious tutelage. This calls for democratization of not only the courses of studies but also managing committees and governing bodies of schools and colleges and different bodies of the university. Hence, suitable laws should immediately be enacted so that democratically constituted managing committees and governing bodies can replace the undemocratic, reactionary and communal

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CONGRESS SMOTHERING DEMOCRACY—

The leadership of the CPI characterizes the leadership of the ruling Congress as progressive. Accordingly, they have even formed an alliance named Progressive Democratic Alliance with the ruling Congress in West Bengal. We reproduce below some news and views published in the organs of the CPI and request the ranks of the party to ponder on the basis of these news and views if the Congress leadership can be characterized as progressive.

New Age, Central Organ of the CPI, in its issue dated May 14 last is found to observe that "no doubt, a new Congress leadership with progressive outlook on some sectors of the economic front had come into power." (page 15) Whether the leadership of a party actually possesses progressive outlook or not cannot be decided subjectively or by the slogans it advances or tall promises it makes to the people. Even fascists make demagogic promises and advance so-called radical slogans. The acid test of progressiveness or reaction is objective practice by the concerned party. And what are the activities of the ruling Congress? **New Age** in the same article at the same page commented as follows: "**Under the garb of polite talks and partial accords, a new tough line towards strikes and non-INTUC Unions began to come to the forefront.**"

There were firings and rampant killings of striking workers as in Bombay, Ambernath, etc. A new toughness to strikes as in the case of the Andhra Bank, a big private bank still existing despite nationalisation, was being shown. Victimisation of hundreds of railway workers was ignored. The tough Maharashtra Government openly announced double promotion to strike-breakers in government service. In the name of national production and necessity, monopolies began to be appeased instead of being nationalised and prices and profits began to soar to new heights". Certainly, these naked pro-monopoly anti-labour activities by Congress governments could not take place, if

the Congress leadership was really opposed to them. The very fact that Congress governments carried on these pro-monopoly anti-labour activities without opposition from any quarter of the Congress conclusively establishes that the ruling Congress party is not at all a progressive democratic party. It is the main political representative of the Indian bourgeoisie defending aggregate interests of Indian monopoly capitalism. The leadership of such a party, it goes without saying, can never be progressive.

New Age (dated June 18 last) on the front page in discussing the approach paper on the fifth plan comes out with the categorical statement that there is "strange similarity between FICCI and Planning Commission" "on approach to Fifth Plan." The Planning Commission is headed by top leaders of the ruling Congress party. Its approach to fifth plan, as contained in the approach paper, has been formulated by the Congress leadership and the Congress Government at the Centre. In that case if on approach to fifth plan there exists similarity between the FICCI, an organisation of top monopolists in our country, and the Planning Commission headed by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the reason is obvious. It is quite natural that the FICCI and the Planning Commission will have similar approach to the fifth plan, inasmuch as both of them represent Indian monopoly interests. When this is the reality, is there any justification in trying to invent progressiveness in the ruling Congress party and its leadership?

Not only the Congress

sees eye to eye with the FICCI, an organisation of tycoons, in agrarian matters also the Congress party and the Central Government have yielded to the big landowners. That is exactly what Mr. C. Rajeswara Rao, General Secretary of the CPI says. Look at **New Age** dated June 25 last (page 5) and you will find it. He comments: "The reason for the tardy and timid behaviour of the Central Government and the pro-landlord bias of most of the state governments is not far to seek. The landlord and kulak lobbies inside the Congress, especially at the state level are quite strong." The "new" "progressive" leadership of the Congress is not only co-existing peacefully with the "landlord and kulak lobbies inside the Congress" but also "yielding to their pressure". Nevertheless, the leadership is progressive and the Congress party is progressive in the estimation of the CPI leadership.

So long we have quoted news and views published in **New Age**. Let us now see what **Kalantar**, Bengali organ of the CPI, has to say about the activities of the ruling Congress party. On several earlier occasions we quoted from this Bengali organ. We will not refer to any news or views to which we alluded earlier. On behalf of the AITUC a statement on police vandalism on peaceful workers of Birlapur was released to the Press which was published in **Kalantar** dated August 6 last. The statement, among others, contain the following charge against the West Bengal Government: "The police, increasing oppression and terror, has arrested the leaders of workers. Order under Section 144 has been issued there. The Government has not yet intervened to settle the real issues of the dispute. On the top of it, surprisingly, through extensive police oppression the Birlas are being backed."

There is no doubt that the police would not have acted in the manner it had acted in favour of the Birlas and against the workers, had not there been a green signal from the Government. Even if it is assumed that the ruling Congress Government in West Bengal did not ask the local police to take action in favour of the Birlas against the workers (this assumption is certainly wrong) then it can by no means be denied that the ruling Congress party and its government in the state had acquiesced in the pro-Birla anti-worker acts of the police. A party and a government that do it can by no stretch of imagination be characterized as progressive. Nevertheless, the CPI leadership not only has been characterizing such a party as progressive but also has formed an alliance with such an anti-people party and been helping such a pro-monopolist anti-worker government to remain in office.

Kalantar dated August 8 last reported as follows: "Of late a big gang of goondas are regularly carrying on attacks with deadly weapons on the peasants of Beledanga under Guptipara in the district of Hooghly. The known Congress workers of this area are providing leadership to this gang of goondas. In carrying on this attack the goondas of Kalna in Burdwan district and from various places of Hooghly district have been mobilized. The aim of this attack is to take away land of the peasants of Beledanga who are led by the All India Kishan Sabha." Now turn to **Kalantar** of August 11 last. There in the 'Kharagpur letter' we find the following: "Kharagpur local thana is now astir. In Baltala village the communists have murdered Brajaballav Mahapatra, a Congress worker. Communists, be they right or left, must in any case

CPI ACCUSES

commit violence. So has started the march of law and order. Dozens after dozens of people have been arrested. A police camp has been set up. Household goods of the peasants have been seized. In the name of inquiry and investigation, cash money, utensils, hens and ducks of the peasants have been looted. Again the rich gentry in the village by their sky-rending shouts of Bande Mataram have succeeded in instilling terror in the hearts of breakers of law and order. Reign of law and order has been re-established. The Chotaloks cannot do whatever they like any more. This is not UF regime—this is Congress Government.” Our readers, we hope, will not fail to note the bitterly sarcastic tone running all through this reportage. Are these not examples of naked fascistic attacks on poor peasants and agricultural labourers? Is it not an open admission of the truth that the present Congress rule in West Bengal is a paradise for the big jotedars and a hell for landless and poor peasants and agricultural labourers? Do not these reports clearly show that it is the jotedars and not the rural poor who are the social support of the ruling Congress in villages? Do they not conclusively establish the fact that Congress workers backed by the police are carrying on violent attacks not only on political opponents but on ordinary landless and poor peasants and agricultural labourers as well? Is it not an undeniable fact that even the CPI which has formed an alliance with the ruling Congress is not being spared from this Congress-cum-police vandalism, the liquidation process engineered and started by the Congress party backed by the administration and the police to liquidate all political opponents of the Congress? Still then will the ruling Congress be

characterized as progressive and its Government in West Bengal supported by the CPI?

Kalantar (dated August 13 last) editorially commented: “Lion’s share of social wealth will go to the pocket of monopolists. And in this way monopoly capitalism will be cornered! A wonderful easy way of wiping out poverty indeed! Even from the nationalized banks arrangements for giving huge loans and advances to the monopolists still remain unimpaired. What a wonderful specimen of honouring election pledge! ...In every respect it is seen that what the government does is just the reverse of what the government promises.” In the face of this reality is it not sheer tailism and servility to the monopolists to characterize the ruling Congress as progressive and support its government? Is not such a servile attitude doing the greatest dis-service to the genuine cause of the people in our country and giving a premium to the ruling capitalist class and its main political representative, the ruling Congress, to further consolidate their position to the enormous damage to democratic mass movements?

Lastly, we turn to **Kalantar** dated August 18 last. There we find reports of four CPI trade union leaders of Durgapur being severely beaten by INTUC workers who are all local Congress workers, of Chhatra Parishad workers attacking one worker of the SF of Hetampur college in Dubrajpur in the district of Birbhum and of three important workers of the CPI in the district of Malda being detained without trial under the MISA for their attempts to check corruption in T.R. work and safeguard the interests of the poor in the matter of distribution of land vested in the state.

FALSEHOOD PRACTISED BY CONGRESS

(Contd. from page 2)

West Bengal’s urgent problems of economic stagnation on August 11 last, “held the policies pursued by the Central Government to be absolutely and wholly responsible for the economic decline of the State.” (**Hindusthan Standard** dated August 12). All the facts and the statements made by some of the Congress Ministers and MPs stated hereinbefore establish that it is absolutely false to say that “the industrial and labour policy of the UF Governments acted as a damper to” and “jeopardized the climate of investment in West Bengal.” On the contrary, they prove that it is the policies of the Congress Government at the Centre that are “absolutely and wholly responsible for economic decline of the

State.” Nevertheless, the Chief Minister and the Finance Minister of West Bengal do not feel shy to dish out false figures and make false statements to mislead the people of the state. Agents of the ruling bourgeoisie, they fear truth most. Only those who are politically weak dare not face truth and reality. Falsehood is their stock in trade. That the ruling Congress is taking recourse to falsehood is a proof of their political weakness. The people of West Bengal have already realized the falsity of tall promises by the Congress, reports of so-called monthly performance by the State Government and of other statements of Congress Ministers. It is the beginning of the end of the ruling Congress in the state. That is the writing on the wall.

To sum up. From what have been published in **New Age** and **Kalantar**, organ’s of the CPI, and quoted by us hereinbefore we get the following facts. First, making a mockery of election pledges, the ruling Congress party and its governments are still patronizing monopolists in various ways. Second, there is similarity between the monopolists on one side and the ruling Congress and its governments on the other in their approach to fifth plan. Third, jotedars have strong hold inside the Congress and the Congress government have “pro-landlord bias.” Fourth, fascistic attacks on workers is still continuing as before. Fifth, landless and poor peasants and agricultural labourers are being subjected to brutal attacks by jotedars and Congress workers backed by the administration and the police. Sixth, political opponents of the ruling Congress are being detained without trial under the MISA for their attempts to check corruption and safeguard the interests of the

poor. Seventh, workers of mass organisations led by other parties are being seriously assaulted by Congress workers. Eighth, even the CPI which is in alliance with the Congress is not being spared from such fascistic attacks and violent assaults. Ninth, household properties of poor peasants are being looted by the police in connivance with local Congress jotedars in the name of investigation and inquiry. Tenth, the present Congress rule has been a paradise for the rich and a hell for the poor where the rich backed by the police and the administration have the final say on all questions while the poor are not even treated as human beings. Will the CPI ranks ponder if in the face of this stern reality the Congress can be called progressive as their leaders are saying, Congress governments supported and whether or not by supporting such governments the CPI is actually supporting reaction and helping it to consolidate its position?

UTUC Leader Assaulted by INTUC Men

Calcutta, August 16—Today when Com. Fatick Ghosh, Secretary U.T.U.C. (Lenin Sarani) and Com. Sankar Saha, Asstt. Secretary, Hindusthan Iron and Steel Company Workers' Union were going to attend the conciliation meeting called by the State Labour Minister at his chamber, about 14 or 15 INTUC workers under the leadership of Lal Bahadur Singh, Congress MLA and Indrajit Tripathi surrounded Com. Ghosh and Com. Saha, abused them in the most filthy language and assaulted them seriously on the first floor of the Writers' Buildings just in front of the chamber of the Home Secretary.

These INTUC leaders and the workers threatened Com. Ghosh and Com. Saha of kidnapping and murdering them. All these took place before the very eyes of the police who didn't take any action against the miscreants. Thereafter these miscreants are chasing Com. Ghosh and Com. Saha. On 21st August last Subrata (Sibu) Sarkhel the local leader of the INTUC at Dum Dum again threatened over telephone that he would murder Com. Ghosh and Com. Saha.

The matter was brought to the notice of the President and Prime Minister of India, Chief Minister and Labour Minister of the State, Home Secretary, the concerned district authorities etc. by leaders of CITU, UTUC, UTUC (Lenin Sarani), TUCC and BPTUC demanding punishment of the guilty persons. No action has yet been taken against the miscreants. This exposes the fascistic attitude of the Ruling Congress Party and the State Government towards political opponents.

Police Firing on Workers

Rourkela, August 22—The workers of Provat Iron Foundry and East India Engineering Ltd. organised under the Rourkela Workers' Union affiliated to the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) have been conducting peaceful strike for the last two and a half months demanding the implementation of various labour laws which the companies have been violating. When such violation is a penal offence under the laws warranting support by the administration and the police to the striking workers and institution of cases against the employers, the police of the present ruling Congress Government in Orissa without any provocation fired today on peaceful striking workers killing one and injuring several others three of whom are in a precarious condition. The police also arrested Com. B. Jena, Secretary of the Union, without any reason while he was proceeding towards the spot of police firing. When the employers' bid to take into the factories outsiders forcibly with the help of the police with a view to breaking the strike was foiled by the peaceful striking workers, the police opened firing illegally and most unjustly.

Office Secretary of the Rourkela Workers' Union has in a statement strongly condemned the police firing and demanded a judicial enquiry on the unprovoked firing and punishment of the guilty police officials, payment of compensation to the members of the workers killed and injured in police firing, immediate settlement of the dispute by compelling the companies to implement the provisions of laws and immediate release of Com. B. Jena and workers arrested in this connection. The Rourkela Bar Association also "condemned" the police firing, demanded "immediate suspension and transfer of guilty officers," a judicial enquiry into police action by a High Court judge and expressed shock at the "inhuman and atrocious behaviour meted out to Mr. Jena, a member of the Association." Com. Fatick Ghosh, Secretary of the UTUC (Lenin Sarani), has in a statement "strongly condemned the ruling Congress Government of Orissa for its nakedly fascistic attack on peaceful striking workers in favour of employers violating with impunity laws of the land and killing and seriously injuring peaceful workers without any provocation."

PRICE RISE

(Contd. from page 4)
would mean further pauperization of the masses of the Indian people and more prosperity of the rich. For, rise in prices hits ordinary people hard while it ensures more profit to the capitalist class. This is conclusively established by the fact that after two decades of economic planning more than 40 per cent of our total population live below poverty level whereas every year index number of industrial profit is rising. To be precise, with 1965-66 as the base year=100 gross profits including depreciation were 106.7 in 1967-68, 111.8 in 1968-69 and 132.2 in 1969-70; profits before tax for the corresponding years being 88.7, 88.7 and 117.3 respec-

tively. (Vide Reserve Bank of India Bulletin, May 1972). It is high time that our people should realize that under the existing capitalist order, be it under planning or not, people are doomed to suffer from relatively more pauperization. It is their duty, therefore, to offer determined resistance against this fleecing of themselves by capitalist sharks by way of higher prices by developing organised mass movements and thereby compelling the ruling Congress Government to revise its economic, fiscal, credit and other policies in such a way as to bring down prices and ensure regular and adequate supply of food articles and other essential commodities to the people at fair prices.

KERALA COLLEGE ISSUE

(Contd. from page 5)
bodies that now run and manage private schools and colleges in Kerala. In our considered view, this can be done even within the framework of the Constitution of India.

The agreement between the State Government and the management of private colleges has not taken any step in the direction of democratization of education and managing committees and governing bodies of private schools and colleges in the state. Rather it has given a

free hand to reactionary communal organisations, like the Nair Service Society, Muslim League, Catholic Church, etc., to preserve their control over education and educational institutions and even provided for admission of students in private colleges and formation of the five-member committee to look after appointment of teachers in private colleges on communal basis which cannot but be severely condemned by democratically minded people of Kerala.